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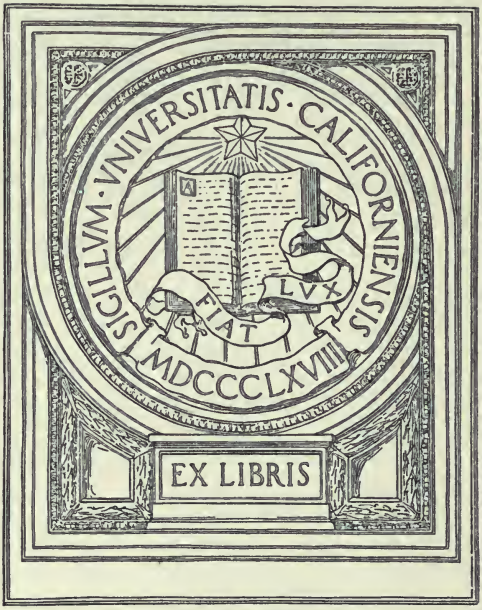
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THE FACTS STATED.

HON. THURLOW WEED

ON THE

MORGAN ABDUCTION.

—A—

DOCUMENT FOR THE PEOPLE.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS:
NATIONAL CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.
1882.

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THURLOW WEED

ON THE ABDUCTION OF CAPTAIN WM. MORGAN.

New York, Sept. 9, 1882.

Dear Sir:—I have delayed the answer to your letter inviting me to attend the unveiling of the monument of Captain William Morgan, in the hope that I should be able to be present on that occasion.

Impaired vision, added to other infirmities, prevents my going far from home. The occasion is one that recalls an event of startling interest, arousing deep popular feeling, first at Batavia, Le Roy, Canandaigua and Rochester, then pervading our own and other States. After reading the proceedings of a meeting at Batavia with the Hon. David E. Evans as presiding officer, I wrote a six-line paragraph for the *Rochester Telegraph*, in which I stated that a citizen of Batavia had been spirited away from his home and family, and that, after a mysterious absence of several days, a village meeting had been held and a committee of citizens appointed to investigate the matter; adding that, as it was known that Freemasons were concerned in this abduction, it behooved the fraternity whose good name was suffering to take the laboring oar in restoring the lost man to his liberty. That paragraph brought dozens of our most influential citizens, greatly excited, to the office, stopping the paper and ordering the discontinuance of their advertisements. I enquired of my partner, Robert Mar-

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tin, what I had done to exasperate so many of our friends. He brought me a book and directed my attention to an obligation invoking severe penalties as a punishment for disclosing the secrets of Masons, inquiring what I thought of a man who, after taking such an obligation, violated it? I replied that I did not know any punishment too severe for such a perjurer. The discontinuance of the paper embraced so large a number of its patrons, I saw that my brief and, as I supposed, very harmless paragraph, would ruin the establishment. Unwilling that my partner should suffer I promptly withdrew, leaving the establishment in the hands of Mr. Martin. The paper was doing well, and until that paragraph appeared my business future was all I could desire.

At that time an editor was wanted at Utica, where I had formerly worked and where I had many friends, but my offer to go there was declined. I was equally unfortunate in my application for editorial employment at Troy. The objection in both cases was that I had been too busy in getting up an excitement about Morgan.

Meantime the mystery deepened and public meetings were held in several villages, Rochester included. In the meeting at Rochester it was assumed that all good citizens would unite in an effort to vindicate the law. A committee was appointed consisting of seven, three of whom were Masons. It was soon discovered that the three Masons went from the committee to the lodge rooms. It was subsequently ascertained that two of these gentlemen were concerned in the abduction, and that Morgan had been committed to the jail in Canandaigua on a false charge of larceny, and that

he had been carried from thence secretly by night to Fort Niagara. The committee encountered an obstacle in obtaining indictments in five of the six counties where indictments were needed. The sheriffs who summoned the grand juries were Freemasons. In four counties no indictments could be obtained. In Ontario, however, the District Attorney, Bowen Whiting, and the Sheriff, Joseph Garlinghouse, though Masons, regarded their obligation to the laws of the State paramount. Sheriff Garlinghouse and District Attorney Whiting discharged their duties independently and honestly. As the investigations proceeded the evidence increased that Morgan had been unlawfully confined in the Canandaigua jail and secretly conveyed to Fort Niagara, where he was confined in the magazine. There was every reason to believe that he was taken from the magazine and drowned in Lake Ontario. This, however, was boldly and persistently denied—denials accompanied by solemn assurances that Morgan had been seen alive in several places, divided the public sentiment. At town meetings, several months after Morgan's disappearance, the question was carried into politics. A large number of zealous Anti-masons determined to make it a political issue. Solomon Southwick was nominated at Le Roy for Governor. Our committee firmly resisted all such efforts, urging all who were connected with us in an effort to vindicate the law to vote for the candidates of the party with which they had been previously connected. We endeavored to induce the Whig State Convention to nominate Francis Granger, but, failing in that, we gave our support to Judge Smith Thompson. Afterwards, at a village election in Rochester, Dr. F. F. Backus, who had been

Treasurer by a unanimous vote of the electors from the time the village charter had been obtained, was again the candidate of both parties. No whisper of opposition was heard before the election, or at the polls, but when the votes were canvassed a majority appeared in favor of Dr. John B. Elwood. Dr. Backus was an active and influential member of the Morgan investigating committee. That astounding result produced an instantaneous change.

Political Anti-masonry from that moment and for that reason became an element in our elections. It was alleged and extensively believed that the "Morgan Committee," to gratify personal aspirations, went voluntarily into politics. Those allegations were as untruthful as they were unjust. It was not until we ascertained that the fraternity, by a secret movement, was strong enough to defeat the candidate of both political parties that we consented to join issue with them politically.

In the autumn of 1827, the discovery of the body of an unknown man on the shore of Lake Ontario, near the mouth of Oak Orchard Creek, gave a new and absorbing aspect to the question. The description of that body, as published by the Coroner who held an inquest over it, induced a belief that it was the body of Wm. Morgan. Our committee decided to hold another inquest. Impressed with the importance and responsibility of the question I gave public notice of our intention and personally invited several citizens who had known Morgan to be present. One of our committee went to Batavia to secure the attendance of Mrs. Morgan and as many others who knew him as would attend. The body had been interred where it was found. The

rude coffin was opened in the presence of between forty and fifty persons. When it was reached and before removing the lid I received from Mrs. Morgan and others who knew him well, descriptions of his person. Mrs. Morgan described the color of his hair, a scar upon his foot, and that his teeth were double all round. Dr. Strong confirmed Mrs. Morgan's statement about double teeth, one of which he had extracted, while another was broken, indicating the position of the extracted and broken teeth. When the coffin was opened the body disclosed the peculiarities described by Mrs. Morgan and Dr. Strong.

This second inquest and the examinations of the body proceeded in open day and in the presence of Masons and Anti-masons, not one of whom dissented from the Coroner's jury, by which the body was unanimously declared to be that of *William Morgan*. Mrs. Morgan, in her testimony, failed to recognize the clothes. The body was taken to Batavia, where it was re-interred, no one as yet expressing any doubt of its identity.

Subsequently, however, we were surprised by a statement that the body supposed to be that of Morgan was alleged to be the body of Timothy Monroe, who had been drowned in the Niagara River several weeks before holding the first inquest. This awakened general and intense feeling. Notice was given that a third inquest would be held at Batavia, where the widow and son of Timothy Monroe appeared as witnesses. Mrs. Monroe swore to a body essentially different from that found at Oak Orchard Creek. Her husband, she said, had black hair that had been recently cut and stood erect. Her testimony made her husband from three to four inches taller than that of the body in question. She testified

that her husband had double teeth all round and described an extracted tooth from the wrong jaw and knew nothing of the broken tooth. The hair upon the head of the drowned man was long, silky, and of a chestnut color, while that of Monroe, according to the testimony of Mrs. Monroe and her son, was short, black and close cut. While Mrs. Monroe failed in describing the body, her description of the clothing was minutely accurate. The heel of his stocking was described as having been darned with yarn different in color. Her cross-examination was very rigid and her answers throughout were found to be correct. The clothing thus described had been in possession of the Coroner, who testified that it had not been seen either by Mrs. Monroe or any stranger from whom she could have obtained information. On the other hand, Mrs. Morgan's description of the body, before she had seen it, was quite as satisfactory as Mrs. Monroe's description of the clothes.

Our committee took no part in the third inquest, and the body, as is known, was declared to be that of Timothy Monroe. Simultaneously an incident occurred showing the vindictive spirit of our opponents. On the evening of the day that the body interred at Batavia was declared by a third inquest to be that of Timothy Monroe, I went into the billiard-room of the Eagle Hotel to see a friend from Clarkson. When leaving the room, Ebenezer Griffin, Esq., a prominent lawyer employed as counsel for Masons, who was playing billiards, turned to me, cue in hand, saying, "Well, Weed, what will you do for a Morgan now?" To which I replied, "That is a good enough Morgan for us till you bring back the one you carried off." On the

following morning the *Daily Advertiser*, a Masonic organ, contained a paragraph charging me with having boastingly said that the body in question "was a good enough Morgan until after the election." That perversion went the rounds of the Masonic and Democratic press, awakening much popular indignation and subjecting me to denunciations in speeches and resolutions at political meetings and conventions. Explanations were disregarded; the maxim that "Falsehood will travel miles while Truth is drawing on its boots" was then verified. I suffered obloquy and reproach from that wicked perversion for nearly half a century. Indeed, there is reason to believe that even now, where I am personally unknown, generations are growing up believing that I mutilated a dead body for political effect, and, when exposed, boasted that it was a good enough Morgan till after the election. Forty years afterwards the editor of the paper who originated that calumny, by a series of pecuniary reverses, was compelled to apply to me for assistance. I avenged the great wrong he had done me by obtaining for him a situation in the Custom House.

This served to extend and intensify the "excitement." It was everywhere charged and widely believed that I had mutilated the body in question for the purpose of making it resemble that of Capt. William Morgan. I encountered prejudices thus created both in Paris and London twenty years afterwards.

Our investigations were embarrassed and protracted by the absence and concealment of important witnesses. One of these witnesses was an invalid soldier who had had the care of Morgan while confined in the magazine at Fort Niagara, but he disappeared, and all efforts to

find him were unavailing for more than a year. I finally traced him (Elisha Adams) to Brookfield, a mountain town in Vermont. We reached the log house of Adams' brother-in-law, with whom he was hiding, between twelve and one o'clock at night. Our rap was responded to by the owner, to whom, on opening the door, the sheriff introduced me, directly after which, and before anything more had been said, we heard a voice from the second floor of the cabin, saying, "I am ready and have been expecting you all winter." Immediately afterwards the old man came down the ladder, and in ten minutes we departed on our return.

While waiting for breakfast at the foot of the mountain several men dropped into the bar-room where we were sitting. When called to breakfast, the landlady, carefully closing the doors, remarked that her husband had sent around for Masons, some of whom had already appeared, but that we need not fear them, for she had sent her daughter to inform other villagers what was going on, and that before we had done breakfast there would be twice as many Anti-masons as Masons in attendance. Returning to the bar-room we found that she had done her work thoroughly. Fifteen or twenty men were in the bar-room glaring at each other and at Adams, but nothing was said and we were driven off unmolested. On our way back Adams, at different times, stated that hearing a noise in the magazine he reported it to Mr. Edward Giddins, keeper of the Fort, who told him that a stranger was lodged there who in a day or two would be taken to his friends in Canada. but nothing must be said about it. He then, from time to time, carried food to the person. Soon

afterwards, near midnight, he was told to have a boat in readiness for the purpose of taking away the man in the magazine. Several gentlemen arrived in a carriage by whom the man was taken from the magazine and escorted to the boat. Adams was told to remain on the dock until the boat should return, and that if in the meantime an alarm should be given he was to show a signal to warn the boat away. As nothing of the kind occurred the boat returned quietly, and as, of the six who left in the boat, only five returned, he supposed that one had gone to his friends in Canada.

Adams was wanted as a witness in trials then pending in Canandaigua. We reached that place in the afternoon of the day the court convened. Three men were on trial for abducting Morgan. The testimony of Adams was essential to complete the link. On being called to the stand he denied all knowledge bearing upon the question. He resided, he said, at the time specified, in the Fort, but knew of no man being confined in the magazine; and knew nothing of men coming there at night in a carriage, and knew nothing of a man being taken from there in a boat. His denials covering the whole ground were explicit. That, for the time being, ended the matter. When the court adjourned I walked across the square with Judge Howell, who presided, and who remarked to me that I had made a long journey for nothing, my witness, Adams, being ignorant of the whole affair. Gen. Vincent Mathews, of Rochester, who was walking on the other side of the Judge, replied with much feeling, "that the old rascal had not uttered one word of truth while he was on the stand."

Gen. Mathews was the leading counsel for the kidnappers, but refused to be a party in tampering with witnesses. On our return to Rochester the witness Adams was in an extra stage with his Masonic friends. As there was no longer any need of hiding he was on his way to Niagara. In passing the Mansion House, Rochester, Adams, who was standing in the doorway, asked me to stop, saying he wanted to explain his testimony. The lawyers, he said, informed him that if he told what he knew about the magazine and the boat it would be a confession that would send him to state's prison. They also told him that the law did not compel a witness to criminate himself; and, to avoid punishment, he must deny the whole story.

In 1831, after my removal from Rochester to Albany, a libel suit was commenced against me by Gen. Gould, of Rochester. It was tried at Albany, Judge James Vanderpoel presiding. The libel charged Gen. Gould with giving money he received from the Royal Arch Grand Chapter to enable Burrage Smith and John Whitney to escape from justice. Gerrit L. Dox, Treasurer of the Grand Chapter, and John Whitney, one of the recipients of the money, were in court to establish the truth of the libel. Mr. Dox testified that a "charity fund" had been entrusted to Gen. Gould. John Whitney was called to prove that he received a part of the fund, with which, in company with Burrage Smith, he left Rochester and was absent nearly a year. Gen. Gould's counsel objected to witness' testimony until it had been shown that Gen. Gould *knew* that the money furnished was to enable Smith and Whitney to escape from justice. The court sustained this objection and Whitney's testimony was excluded. As it was

impossible to *prove* what was known only to Gen. Gould himself, the trial ended abruptly. Judge Vanderpoel, in charging the jury, dwelt at length upon the licentiousness of the press, and called upon the jury to give exemplary damages to the injured and innocent plaintiff. The jury thus instructed, but with evident reluctance, found a verdict of four hundred dollars against me. My offence consisted in asserting a fact, the exact truth of which would have been established if the testimony had not been ruled out by a monstrous perversion of justice.

Col. Simeon B. Jewett, of Clarkson, Major Samuel Barton of Lewiston, and John Whitney of Rochester, passed that evening at my house. Jewett was prepared to testify that he furnished a carriage for those who were conveying Morgan secretly from Canandaigua to Niagara. John Whitney was one of the party. Major Barton would have testified that he furnished the carriage which conveyed the party from Lewiston to Fort Niagara, John Whitney being one of that party. Whitney would have sworn that Gould supplied money to enable him to "escape from justice." In the course of the evening, the Morgan affair being the principal topic of conversation, Col. Jewett turned to Whitney with emphasis and said, "John, what if you make a clean breast of it." Whitney looked inquiringly at Barton, who added, "Go ahead."

Whitney then related in detail the history of Morgan's abduction and fate. The idea of suppressing Morgan's intended exposure of the secrets of Masonry was first suggested by a man by the name of Johns. It was discussed in lodges at Batavia, Le Roy and Rochester. Johns suggested that Morgan should be

separated from Miller and placed on a farm in Canada West. For this purpose he was taken to Niagara and placed in the magazine of the Fort until arrangements for settling him in Canada were completed, but the Canadian Masons disappointed them. After several meetings of the lodge in Canada, opposite Fort Niagara, a refusal to have anything to do with Morgan left his "kidnappers" greatly perplexed. Opportunely a Royal Arch chapter was installed at Lewiston. The occasion brought a large number of enthusiastic Masons together. "After labor," in Masonic language, they "retired to refreshment." Under the exhilaration of champagne and other viands the Chaplain (the Rev. F. H. Cummings, of Rochester) was called on for a toast. He responded with peculiar emphasis and in the language of their ritual: "The enemies of our order—may they find a grave six feet deep, six feet long, and six feet due east and west." Immediately after that toast, which was received with great enthusiasm, Col. William King, an officer in our war of 1812, and then a Member of Assembly from Niagara county, called Whitney of Rochester, Howard of Buffalo, Chubbuck of Lewiston, and Garside of Canada, out of the room and into a carriage furnished by Major Barton. They were driven to Fort Niagara, repaired to the magazine and informed Morgan that the arrangements for sending him to Canada were completed and that his family would soon follow him. Morgan received the information cheerfully and walked with supposed friends to the boat, which was rowed to the mouth of the river, where a rope was wound around his body, to each end of which a sinker was attached. Morgan was then thrown overboard. He grasped the

gunwale of the boat convulsively. Garside, in forcing Morgan to relinquish his hold was severely bitten.

Whitney, in concluding his narrative, said he was now relieved from a heavy load; that for four years he had not heard the window rustle or any other noise at night without thinking the sheriff was after him. Col. Jewett, looking fixedly at Whitney, said, "Weed can hang you now." "But he won't," was Whitney's prompt reply. Of course a secret thus confided to me was inviolably kept, and twenty-nine years afterwards, while attending a National Republican Convention at Chicago, John Whitney, who then resided there, called to say that he wanted me to write out what he once told me about Morgan's fate, to be signed by him in the presence of witnesses, to be sealed up and published after his death. I promised to do so before leaving Chicago. There was no leisure, however, during the sitting of the Convention, and even before its final adjournment, forgetting what I had told Whitney, I hurried to Iowa, returning by way of Springfield to visit Mr. Lincoln. In the excitement of the canvass which followed and the secession of the Southern States upon Mr. Lincoln's election, I neglected the important duty of securing the confession Whitney was so anxious to make. In 1861, I went to Europe, and while in London wrote a letter to Whitney asking him to get Alex. B. Williams, then a resident of Chicago, to do what I had so unpardonably neglected. That letter reached Chicago one week after Whitney's death, closing the last and only chance for the revelation of that important event.

Whitney was a mason by trade, honest, industrious, sober, but excitable. In all the early stages of the

Morgan affair he believed he was doing his duty. The final crime was committed under the circumstances I have related.

I now look back through an interval of fifty-six years with a conscious sense of having been governed through the "Anti-masonic excitement" by a sincere desire, first, to vindicate the violated laws of my country, and next, to arrest the great power and dangerous influences of "secret societies." We labored under serious disadvantages. The people were unwilling to believe that an institution so ancient, to which so many of our best and most distinguished men belonged, was capable of not only violating the laws but of sustaining and protecting offending men of the order. A vast majority of the American people believed that Morgan was concealed by our committee for political effect. While we were being fiercely denounced as incendiary spirits, Judge Enos T. Throop, in charging the Grand Jury at Canandaigua, spoke of Anti-masonry as a "blessed spirit;" a spirit which he hoped "would not rest until every man implicated in the abduction of Morgan was tried, convicted and punished."

It is pleasant also to contemplate the character of those with whom I was then associated judicially and politically. Than James Wadsworth, Geo. W. Patterson and Philo C. Fuller, of Livingston; Trumbull Cary. Geo. W. Lay, Jas. Brisbane, Moses Taggart, Seth M. Gates, Phineas L. Tracy, Herbert A. Read, Timothy Fitch, Hinman Holden and T. F. Talbot of Genesee; Albert H. Tracy, Millard Fillmore, Noah P. Sprague and Thos. C. Love, of Erie; Bates Cook, Geo. H. Boughton, Robert Fleming, John Phillips and Lyman A. Spaulding, of Niagara; Andrew B. Dickinson, of

Steuben; John Maynard and William Sackett, of Seneca; Myron Holley, of Wayne; Francis Granger, Henry W. Taylor and Samuel Miles Hopkins, of Ontario; Wm. H. Seward, Christopher and Edwin B. Morgan, of Cayuga; Rev. Dr. Nott, of Schenectady; Victory Birdseye and E. W. Leavenworth, of Onondaga; Wm. H. Maynard, of Oneida; Gideon Hard, of Orleans; Abner Hazeltine and John Birdsall, of Chautauqua; Samuel Work, Heman Norton, Samuel G. Andrews, James K. Livingston, Frederick Whittlesey, Dr. F. F. Backus, A. W. Riley and Harvey Ely, of Monroe; Henry Dana Ward, of New York; Weare C. Little, of Albany; Richard Rush, John Sargent and Amos Ellmaker, of Pennsylvania; and William Wirt, of Virginia, an equal number of truly good and eminent men cannot be found. My friends Weare C. Little of Albany, Gideon Hard of Orleans, Moses Taggart of Genesee, and Lyman A. Spaulding of Niagara, are almost the only survivors.

City and County of New York. } ss. [DICTATED.]

Thurlow Weed, being duly sworn, says that the foregoing statements are true.

THURLOW WEED.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 28th day of September, 1882.

SPENCER C. DOTY, *Notary Public*,
17 Union Square, New York City.

FRONTISPIECE.

The frontispiece is an engraving of the Morgan monument. It stands in the old cemetery at Batavia, N. Y., a few feet from the track of the Central R. R. It is thirty-eight feet in height, and weighs forty tons. It was erected by R. F. Carter, of Ryegate, Vt., under the supervision of the National Christian Association, and unvailed at its 14th Annual Convention, in presence of an immense concourse of people, who gathered to pay a tribute of respect to the heroism of the man whose courage and devotion to his country it is designed to perpetuate. Rev. Joseph E. Roy, D. D., of Atlanta, Ga., and President Charles A. Blanchard, of Wheaton, Ill., were the principal speakers. As a work of art it ranks with the first in our country, and is a fitting memorial to the martyr whose life was sacrificed by Freemasons when they discovered his intention to publish the secrets of their order. On the four sides of the polished dice are the following inscriptions in legible characters:

SOUTH SIDE: Sacred to the memory of Wm. Morgan, a native of Virginia, a captain in the war of 1812, a respectable citizen of Batavia, and a martyr to the freedom of writing, printing and speaking the truth. He was abducted from near this spot in the year 1826, by Freemasons, and murdered for revealing the secrets of their order.

EAST SIDE: Erected by volunteer contributions from over 2,000 persons residing in Ontario, Canada, and twenty-six of the United States and Territories.

NORTH SIDE: The court records of Genesee County, and files of the Batavia *Advocate*, kept in the Recorder's office, contain the history of the events that caused the erection of this Monument, Sept. 13, 1882.

WEST SIDE: "The bane of our civil institutions is to be found in Masonry, already powerful, and daily becoming more so. * * I owe to my country an exposure of its dangers."—*Capt. William Morgan.*

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